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Time to repeal the Social Security/Unemployment offset

To the Editor:

There are many different types of offset laws that were passed decades ago that have become antiquated.

Economic conditions have changed radically in the 21st century, yet the outdated Offset acts are still eroding working senior's unemployment checks.

Earlier this year the president of Washington/ South County AARP Chapter 1072 ignited a determined campaign to call for the repeal of the now outdated Social Security / Unemployment Insurance Offset Act with "Letters to the Editor" that appeared in our local newspapers. The letters told how the State of Rhode Island counts your Social Security benefits against you when they calculate how much unemployment compensation you should receive.

The letters also noted that 42 states have repelled the Offset and Rhode Island is only one of the remaining eight states that still enforces Offset.

Rep. Thomas Slater introduced House Bill 5296, a bill to repeal The

Social Security/ Unemployment Insurance Offset Act and Senator Frank Ciccone introduced S161, a Senate companion bill.

These bills would allow elderly on Social Security to collect their full unemployment compensation.

AARP Rhode Island, with the help of their chapters, testified and lobbied the Rhode Island General Assembly.

After nearly six months of constant campaigning – the legislation to change the way Rhode Island computes the senior's unemployment is now law.

I sincerely thank all of the members of AARP Chapter 1072 and all the seniors who signed cards, sent letters and made phone calls to the lawmakers.

This is not only a victory for our elderly workers; it is a gift to the many Baby Boomers that are reaching Social Security age. "Together, united, we can make a positive change."

John E. O'Hara
President, AARP Chapter 1072